



## ***Specimen Packaging and Transport Protocol For Suspected Bioterrorism Incidents***

Upon notification of a suspicious package or substance, responding agencies should make a determination if there is A CREDIBLE THREAT present. Use everyday standard protocols for this assessment. Several protocols on the identification, handling and opening of suspicious packages and letters have been disseminated by multiple entities in the country including the U.S. Postal Service, the National Domestic Preparedness Office, the Centers for Disease Control and the Washington State Patrol (WSP). If you need copies of these established procedures, contact the State Emergency Operations Office at Washington State Emergency Management (EMD), (800) 258-5990.

If responding agencies determine that a package or substance may present a credible threat, they must consult with the responsible local health department and notify the FBI. Once a decision has been made by the local health department and law enforcement that a specimen warrants testing, use the following guidelines to package and transport the specimen to the Washington State Department of Health Public Health Laboratories. No specimen will be accepted at the Washington State Public Health Laboratories unless the responsible local health department and Washington State Communicable Disease Epidemiology (1-877-539-4344) have been contacted prior to arrival of the specimen. Chain of Custody documentation must also accompany each specimen.

### **Packaging specimens for testing**

It is recommended that any specimen with a credible threat or unusual substance should be screened for chemical, radiological, or explosive materials (unless there is not enough material available for field testing) before it can be processed by the Washington State Public Health Laboratories. Documentation of any screening must accompany the specimen to the laboratory.

### **POWDERS**

- Place the specimen or a representative sample of the specimen in a plastic zip-lock bag, wipe the outside of bag with a solution of 9 parts water and 1 part household bleach, place a biohazard label on the bag, and follow steps 1-4. Bleach solution should be made fresh each day of use.
  1. Place the zip-lock bag into a leak proof container with a tight cover that is labeled "biohazard."
  2. Place this container into a second leak proof container with a tight cover that is labeled "biohazard." The size of the second container should be less than a one-gallon paint can.
  3. Place the second container into a third leak proof container that is labeled "biohazard." The third container should be no larger than a one-gallon paint can.
  4. Containers should meet state and federal regulations for transport of hazardous material, and be properly labeled.

### **LIQUIDS**

- Liquids must be screened for chemical, explosives and toxins before sending samples to the Washington State Public Health Laboratories.
- If possible liquids should be transferred to a plastic container, if there is a large amount of liquid a sample should be collected in a 100ml screw top plastic container.
- Wrap the container with absorbent material (enough to absorb the full amount of liquid) and place a ziplock bag, wipe the outside of the bag with a solution of 9 parts water and 1 part household bleach, and follow steps 1-4 above.

## **Transporting specimens to the Washington State Department of Health Public Health Laboratories**

***No specimens will be accepted unless the Washington State Public Health Laboratories has been contacted prior to arrival of the specimen.*** Specimens **must** be coordinated with the local health department first and then the Public Health Laboratory by calling Washington State Communicable Disease Epidemiology at 1-877-539-4344, a 24-hour emergency phone number.

In most situations, local law enforcement, HAZMAT, Washington State Patrol or a FBI representative will transport the specimen directly to the Washington State Public Health Laboratories located at 1610 150<sup>th</sup> Street NE in Shoreline. Driving directions from I 5: Take exit N.E. 145<sup>th</sup> St. (WA-523); head east on 145<sup>th</sup> Ave NE; turn LEFT onto 15<sup>th</sup> Ave NE; turn RIGHT on NE 150<sup>th</sup>; the Washington State Public Health Laboratories will be on your left.

In cases where the specimen is shipped by commercial carrier, ship according to State and Federal shipping regulations.